Effingham County Georgia
Planning and Zoning Services

Staff Report

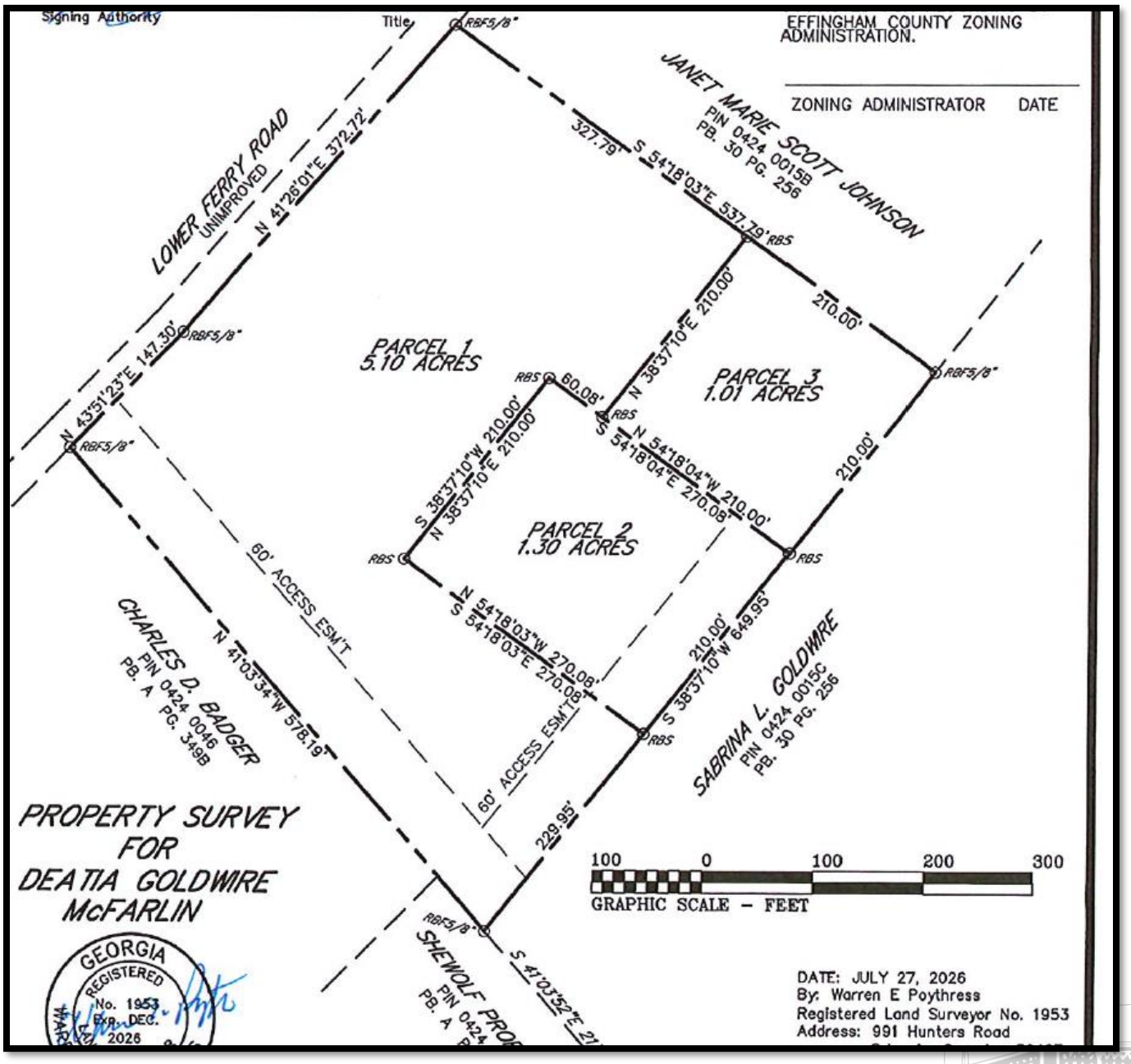
Subject:	Rezoning
Author:	Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department:	Development Services
Application:	RZN-26-40
Meeting Date:	November 3, 2026
Existing Zoning:	**AR-1 (Agricultural Residential; 5 acres)**
Proposed Zoning:	**AR-2 (Agricultural Residential; 1 acre or more)**
Map & Parcel(s):	424-15
Total Acreage Affected	± 5.684 acres out of 10.784 acres
Location:	352 Lower Ferry Road
Commissioner District:	Third District
Proposed Use:	Residential Subdivision
Applicant/Owner:	Deatia McFarlin 366 Lower Ferry Road Clyo, GA 31303

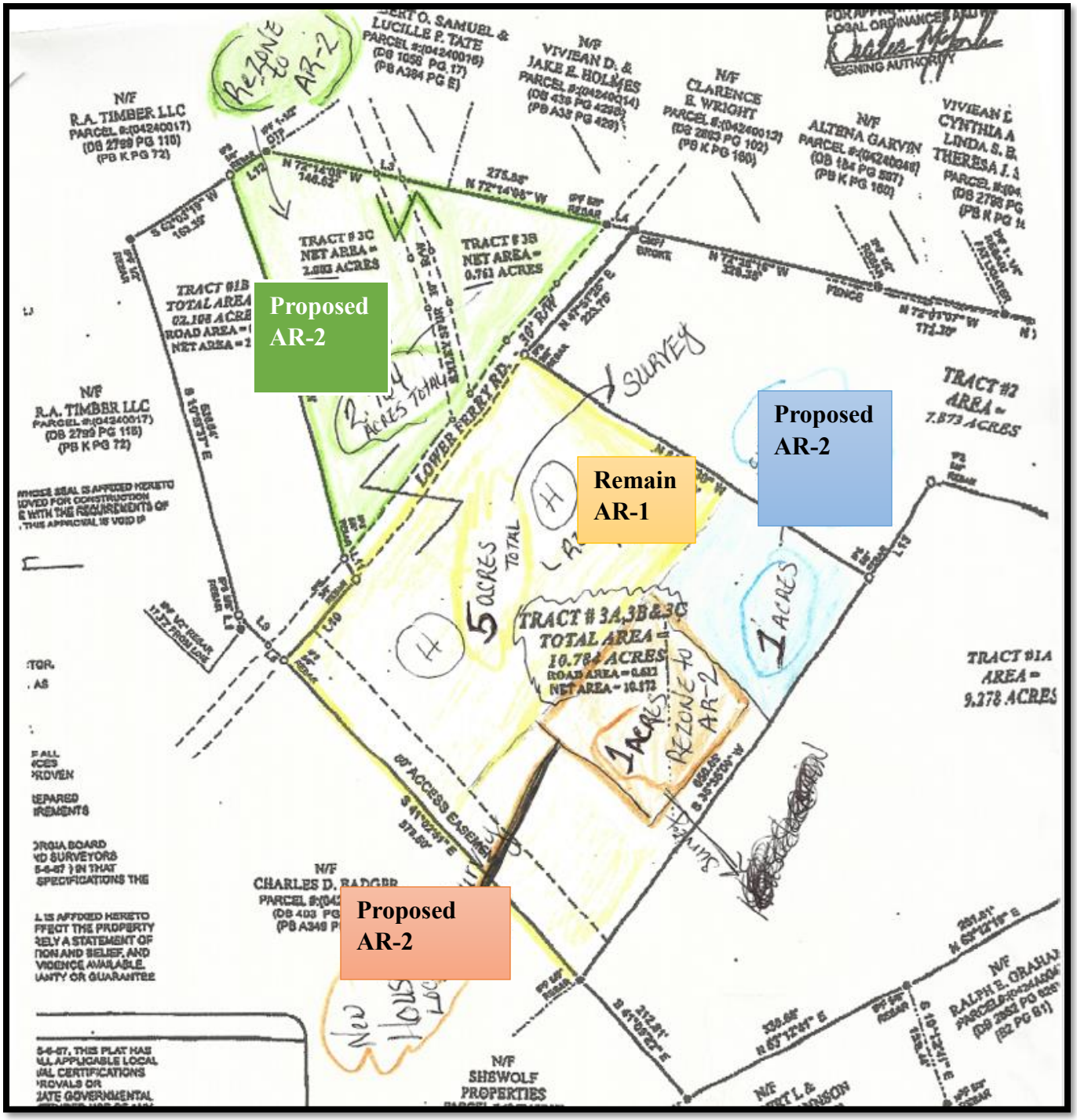
Rezoning Summary:

Item	Description
Request	Rezone ± 5.684 acres from **AR-1 to AR-2**
Proposed Use	**Residential Subdivision**
Existing Use	Residential
Future Land Use	**Agricultural**
Utilities	Private well & septic system
Access	Lower Ferry Road

Project Summary:

The applicant requests rezoning approximately **±5.684** acres from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential-1) **to AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2).** The request is to allow the applicant to subdivide the property into four separate parcels to create two new home sites. The remaining ±5.10 acres will remain AR-1 with the two existing homes.





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Zoning History

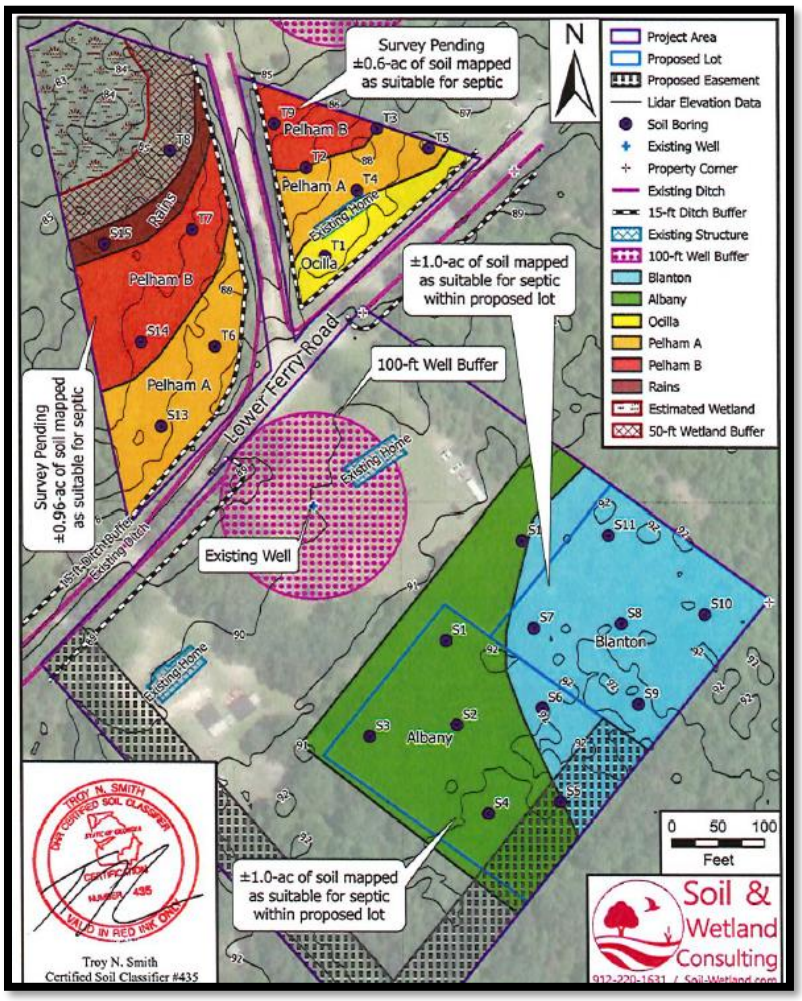
The subject property is currently zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential).** A Rural Business was approved on June 7, 2011, to operate a hair salon.

Existing Site Condition

The subject property consists of approximately **±10.784 acres** and has direct frontage and access from Lower Ferry Road. The parcel has a unique configuration, as it is divided into three separate sections by two existing roadways. Exley Spur separates a portion of the northern area of the parcel, while Lower Ferry Road further divides the northern and southern portions of the property.

The northern portion of the property contains one existing single-family residence, while the southern portion contains two existing single-family residences.

County GIS mapping indicates **wetlands and no known mapped FEMA Zone flood hazard area. A soil study has also been provided.**



Surrounding Use and Zoning Pattern

Surrounding Neighborhood
• North: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
• South: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more) & AR-2 (Agricultural–Residential, 1 acre or more)
• West: AR-2 (Agricultural–Residential, 1 acre or more) & AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
• East: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more) & AR-2 (Agricultural–Residential, 1 acre or more)

The area surrounding the subject property is predominantly rural in character and consists primarily of large agricultural tracts, rural residential homesteads, and scattered smaller residential parcels. The surrounding development pattern reflects a mix of agricultural uses and low-density residential development that is consistent with the area's existing rural character.

North

- Agricultural- residential homesteads (AR-1)
- Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

East

- Agricultural -residential homesteads (AR-1 & AR-2)
- Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

South

- Agricultural-residential homesteads (AR-1 & AR-2mnn)
- Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

West

- Agricultural Residential homesteads (AR-1& AR-2)
- Berryville Pines Subdivision (R-1)
- Large tracts zoned (AR-1)

Zoning Development Standards for AR-2

Minimum lot area Maximum number of principal residences – one Maximum number of accessory dwelling units – one	1 acre 1 unit 1 unit
Minimum lot road frontage	100 feet
Minimum lot width at building line	100 feet
Minimum front yard setback	50 feet
Minimum rear yard setback	25 feet
Minimum side yard (interior) setback	15 feet
Minimum side yard (street/road easement) setback	50 feet
Minimum side yard (secondary street) setback	25 feet

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Zoning Classification

Agricultural Residential 2 *is established to foster rural residential living while integrating open space and natural resource conservation. This district supports moderately sized lots (minimum 1 acre), encouraging low-density development that blends residential uses with the rural landscape. AR-2 provides a transitional zone between more intense development and larger-lot rural areas, maintaining moderate spacing between homes and limited pedestrian activity to preserve the rural atmosphere. This district is designated exclusively for family or estate subdivisions, ensuring development remains with the rural character.*

Intensity of Use

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential-1) **t**o **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2)** represents a limited increase in land-use intensity. It is intended to allow the applicant to subdivide for future residential use.

Although the AR-2 district permits a smaller minimum lot size than AR-1, the request does not facilitate a large-scale increase in residential density. Instead, it creates two additional residential home sites under its existing agricultural-residential zoning. The proposed rezoning maintains the area's low-density rural character and is consistent with the intended use of the AR-2 zoning district for limited residential development.

Infrastructure

The property is served by **a private well and septic system, consistent with the** surrounding development.

Roadway Classification: Lower Ferry Road is classified as a local road and gains access from Stillwell Cloy Road, which is classified as a Major Collector within Effingham County.

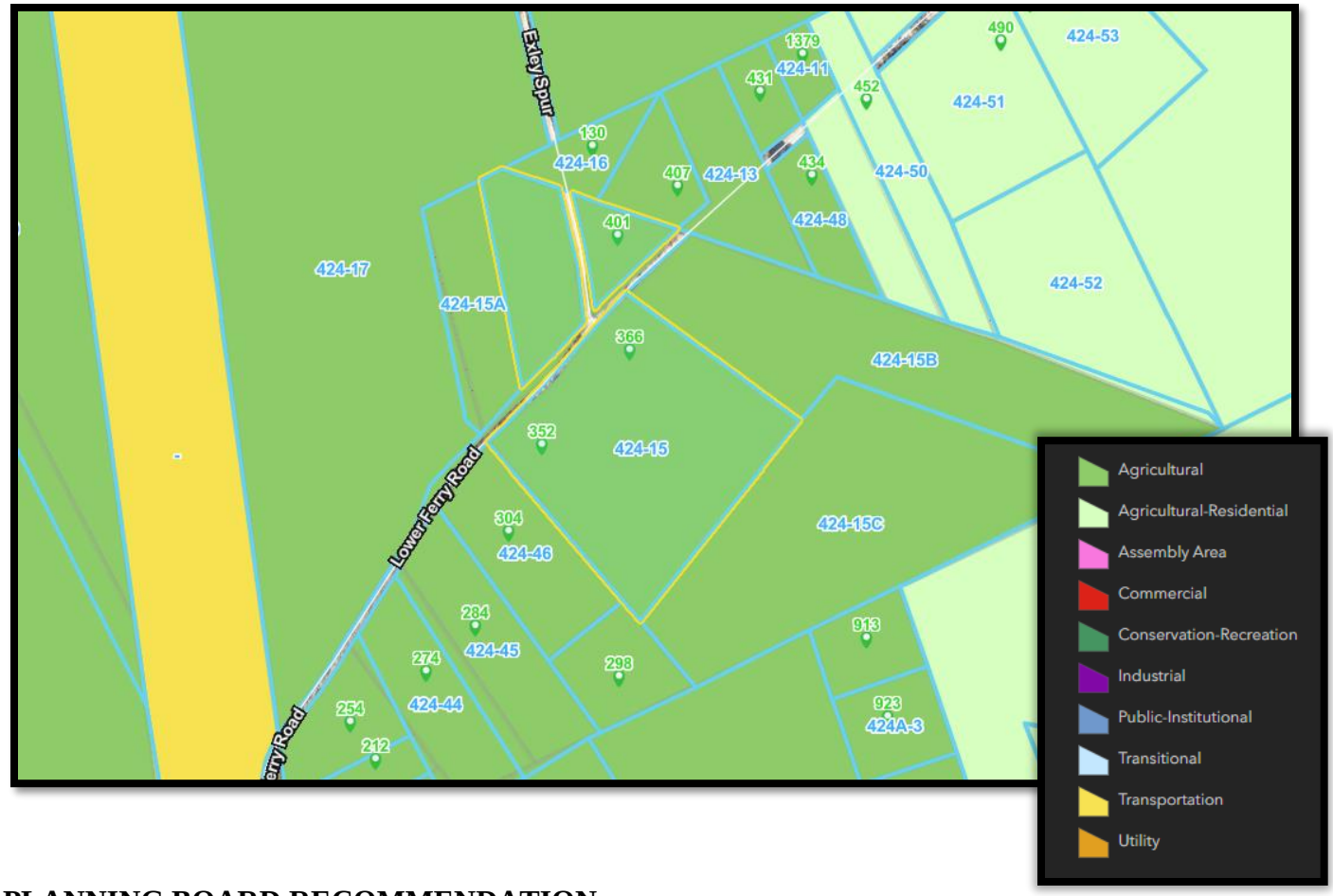
Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

The proposed rezoning from AR-1 (Agricultural Residential-1) to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2)** is not anticipated to adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare. The request is minimal and is intended to create two additional residential parcels for future residential use. The proposed increase in residential density is minimal and is compatible with the surrounding rural residential character of the area. Any future subdivision and residential construction will be required to comply with the Effingham County Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Environmental Health requirements.

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

The subject property is designated **Agricultural** on the **Future Land Use Map (FLUM).** The Agricultural designation is intended to preserve agricultural lands, protect rural character, and support farming, forestry, and very low-density residential development. The proposed rezoning from **A**R-1 (Agricultural Residential) to **AR-2 (Agricultural Residential-2)** is not fully consistent with the Agricultural Future Land Use designation because it allows for smaller residential lot sizes than are typically envisioned within this land use category. However, the request is limited in scope. It will result in the subdivision of the property into only four residential lots. The proposed development maintains a low-density residential character that is generally compatible with the surrounding rural area. Although the Agricultural Future Land Use designation generally envisions larger rural lots, the proposed rezoning is limited to two residential lots. It maintains a low-density development pattern that remains compatible with the surrounding agricultural landscape.

*The parcel is designated **Agricultural** on the **Future Land Use Map (FLUM)**. This category is for land dedicated to retaining the rural character throughout the county, including fields, lots, pastures, farmsteads, specialty farms, livestock production, agriculture, or commercial timber. Protection of natural resources should be at the forefront of planning for development in these areas. This category is also for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers, or similar uses. This area does allow for low density residential development that is compatible with nearby agricultural uses. Mixed use housing types such as stick built or manufactured homes are permitted in these areas. Rural areas are characterized by low intensity development, larger lots, low pedestrian orientation and access, with a sizable amount of open space, and with a high degree of separation and deep setbacks. (Effingham County 2020–2040 Joint Comprehensive Plan, p. 36).*



PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

At the **October 13, 2026,** Planning Board meeting, the Planning Board conducted a public hearing regarding the requested rezoning application to rezone approximately ± 5.684 acres from AR-1 to AR-2 to allow for permitted uses in AR-2.

During its deliberations, the Planning Board discussed the proposed zoning classification, subdivision clarification, easements,. and similar adjacent zoning.

No one present in opposition.

Following the public hearing and discussion, **the Planning Board voted to recommend approval of the rezoning request.**

Staff Summary

Staff finds that the requested rezoning is compatible with the surrounding land use pattern and consistent with the intent of the AR-2 (Agricultural Residential) zoning district. The request is generally consistent with the Agricultural designation of the Future Land Use Map and supports the Comprehensive Plan's goal of accommodating low-density rural residential development while preserving the character of the surrounding area.